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RECOLLECTIONS OF CHARLES CHRISTOPHER FROST.

ELIZABETH B. DAVENPORT.

(With portrait.)

(Read at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Vermont Botanical Club.)

THE recent transfer of the valued herbarium of Mr. C. C. Frost to the University of Vermont makes it fitting at this time and place that something should be said regarding the personal history of this keen but modest botanist. I have been asked to tell you what I have known of him during many years' residence in Brattleboro, where he lived and worked.

To-day the world is alert and on every hand interested in scientific inquiry. Even our smaller communities are penetrated by the spirit of research, and the student may have the stimulation and inspiration of daily companionship with those who share his special interests. Some of you will, however, remember the small New England village of thirty years ago, will recall its relative simplicity not only in the outward mode of living but in its intellectual activity, and can picture the still simpler life which prevailed two or three decades earlier. The centre of all culture was essentially the home. The literary club, the lyceum, extensive and well selected libraries, and carefully arranged museums, which are now multiplying throughout our country, were then relatively rare. The atmosphere was not one to stimulate research. The impulse must in those days have come much more from natural aptitude, and to persons of character strong enough to take the initiative, to men who might be leaders.

To have known Mr. Frost as he was and to have seen the high character of his intellectual attainments notwithstanding the limitations of his environment, makes one long to have known him as he

might have been, had his working years fallen later in the century, when he would have been in closer touch with the moulding influences of a wider culture, and his work influenced by the advanced methods now prevalent in botanical research.

Mr. Frost always impressed me as possessing in high degree the characteristics we call puritan. Thrift, industry, perseverance, simplicity, singleness of purpose, integrity, and great reserve, were the salient features of his personality. The inspirational forces of life were his, but he lacked the surroundings that tend to life's enrichment. He had a fine face, indicating at once strength of character, the clear, dark and penetrating eyes being most pleasant to meet and suggesting the fine fibre of the man. In manner he was quietly courteous, his words were few and to the point.

For almost half a century Mr. Frost followed his trade in the one shop, and for most of this time lived in the one house, which stood near Whetstone Brook. It was a typical house of our early New England villages, long, low, and painted white, the chambers enclosed in the sloping roof. The site of the shop is now occupied by a modern business block. The house is still standing but not upon its original foundation.

Mr. Frost's business and studies held a strange companionship. All the business hours of the day found him at the bench or counter, usually the former. It was there that the visitor found him with shoe upon his aproned knee, his hands busy with awl and thread, and an open book by his side. His whole attention came directly to your need, though you knew his mind had dropped an absorbing train of thought to meet your wants. At noon the shop was closed for an hour, fully half this time being spent in the attic room, where his botanical work was done. It is easy to imagine the almost irresistible impulse to extend this short half hour, the reluctance with which researches were broken off just at a point of critical interest; yet the observer could not see but that the door of his treasure house — a veritable treasure house it was to him — was closed as readily as the door of his shop. Rare occasions there were when the shop remained closed one, two, or even three days at a time. For when some friend came, some one with kindred interests, business was laid entirely aside and even his household saw him only at meals. Our imagination need not be great or intuition especially sympathetic to tell us that these days must have been oases in life's journey. But

the visit over and the friend gone, his hours were immediately readjusted to the old routine.

To the casual acquaintance Mr. Frost spoke of his botanical interests only when questioned, but he welcomed everyone who came to him for botanical help, assisted courteously, and was always ready to give careful directions for finding the station of any plant for which the student might be inquiring.

When this reserved man labeled a specimen "more precious than gold" he was giving for a moment a swift vision of the enthusiasm and love for his special calling which lay deep in his strong nature, where it burned like a fine fire. Mr. Frost's character in its entirety makes him a representative of a type challenging admiration, compelling respect and inspiring to ideals of patient, thorough, and persevering work. It is not necessary for me to speak specifically of Mr. Frost's work in his chosen field of botanical research. Any discussion of this subject would come far more fittingly from the University of Vermont, which has just done so much to honor his name and has given his work a permanent place and association with her history.

## SPIRANTHES NEGLECTA.

OAKES AMES.

(Plate 51.)

WHAT I propose to call *Spiranthes neglecta*, is a rare New England orchid, often confused with *Spiranthes praecox*, Watson, of the Southern states. It is scantily represented in most herbaria, though the known stations from which it is reported are numerous enough to show that the characters considered of specific value are not confined to a localized form. In the New England Botanical Club Herbarium there is a single specimen from Connecticut; in the Gray Herbarium there are several specimens, among them one from Washington, D. C., and one from Georgia, but none from New England, if we exclude a specimen with nothing more definite on the label as to habitat than, "collected on the Cape, August, 1896," which conjecturally may be ascribed to Massachusetts. Mr. Walter